

# COMMON GROUND



NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 1949

VOLUME III NUMBER 6

PRICE : THREEPENCE

# THE COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

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To combat all forms of religious and racial intolerance. To promote mutual understanding and goodwill between Christians and Jews, and to foster co-operation in educational activities and in social and community service.

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Cover Photograph : "Nativity", Mural Painting, Berwick Church.  
(Country Life)

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## The Christmas Message through a Picture

*In Berwick Parish Church, Sussex, are several interesting mural paintings. One of them, Nativity, painted by Duncan Grant, is reproduced on our cover.*

**D**URING the Middle Ages, ordinary people had few of the opportunities which we have to-day for learning from books or enjoying pictures. Many of them could not even read. The Church taught the Bible stories partly through wall paintings which also added colour and beauty to the lives of the worshippers. Frequently the figures in the paintings, although typifying men and women of hundreds of years before, were represented as wearing the clothes of contemporary England. Such pictures, while inaccurate in historical detail, yet spoke to the people in everyday language, so conveying to them the lesson in a living way.

Our cover picture, *Nativity*, represents an effort to re-introduce in the Church mural paintings in a modern form. About seven years ago, the Bishop of Chichester invited a few leading British artists to give their talents to the Church as artists did in the old days. They accepted the invitation and Berwick Parish Church, in Sussex, was chosen for the experiment. This venture was carried out under the auspices of C.E.M.A. and was sponsored by the Sussex Churches Art Council.

In *Nativity*, the artist used as models a Sussex barn, a Southdown lamb, a Pyecombe crook, and local downland scenery as background. The models for the figures were local shepherds and their children.

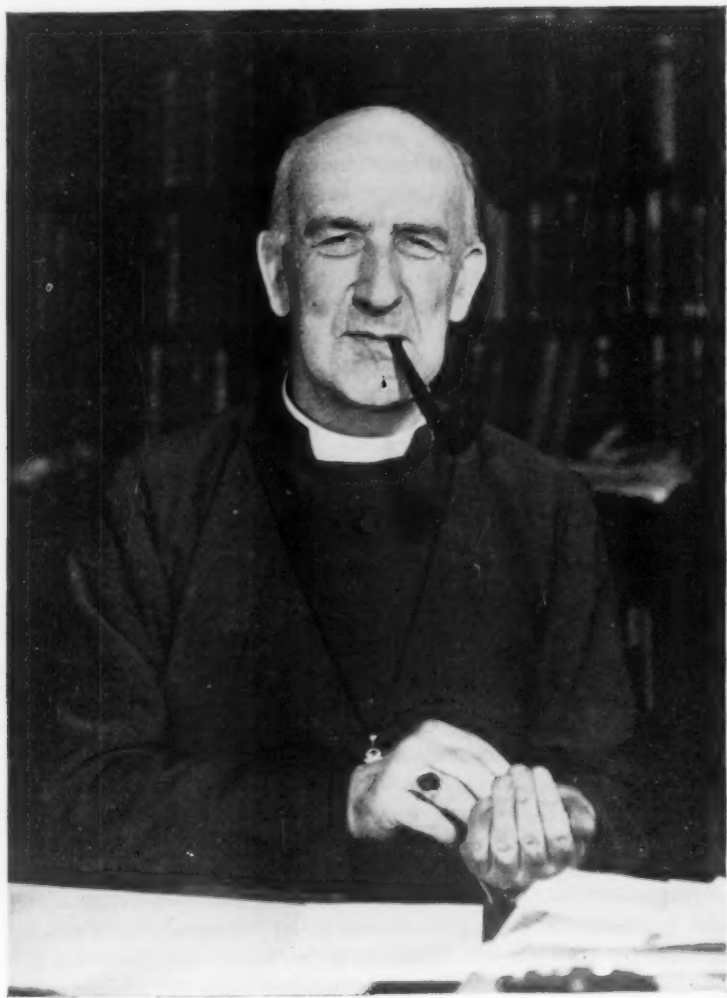
At the dedication, the Bishop referred in particular to this picture, and said: "If you see people you know as people in the pictures, it should serve to remind you that though all this happened long ago in a distant land it belongs as much to you to-day."

ONE OF THE OBJECTS of the Council of Christians and Jews is to 'combat religious and racial intolerance.' One may put this positively by saying that one of its objects is to *encourage* religious and racial *tolerance*. There are countries in which the chief obstacle to tolerance is to be found in government policy and action. In others there are full liberties for all, the obstacle is to be found more insidiously in the prejudices and antipathies which divide citizens and affect general opinion. Bishop Creighton once said : "Liberty is a tender plant and needs jealous watching. It is always unsafe in the world." We know how true that is by bitter experience in the recent past and in the present. We of this Council uphold respect for the fundamental liberties of all men by all men: that is what tolerance means. But we must recognise what tolerance is and what it is not. A man is tolerant, to quote Bishop Creighton again, "not because he puts his own opinions out of sight, not because he thinks that other opinions are as good as his own: tolerance is the expression of that reverence for others which forms a great part of the lesson which Christ came to teach. It is the means whereby he learns to curb self-conceit and submit to the penetrating discipline of Christian love." We cannot curb intolerance only by telling people to be tolerant: it takes more than that to subdue prejudices and irrational antipathies and turn them to the restraints of understanding and forbearance. It needs submission to divine law and divine love: it is a task of the spirit. In that task Christians and Jews on the council co-operate, and in doing so show the true tolerance which they also try to propagate. They can do so because under their different spiritual insights and disciplines, they equally look to the Divine Law and the Divine Love to guide them. In that fellowship they combat intolerance and, in these days of strife, uphold the better way. The times need urgently the work which the Council does, and the Council needs the support of Christian and Jew alike.

But it is a task where combined action gives added strength. On these issues Christians and Jews stand together, They can also act together.

Message

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY



*Photo: Ronald Procter*

## Jews in Western Europe

E. J. FEUCHTWANGER.

*In his final article, Mr. Feuchtwanger completes his account of the life of the Jewish communities in Western Europe and their contribution to the world around them.*

### 3. THE EMANCIPATION AND AFTER.

THE emancipation of the Jews ranks with the Babylonian exile or the dispersion as one of the great transformations in the history of Israel. It was also an event of significance for Western Europe, releasing the energies of a highly gifted people and allowing them to make a more direct contribution to European civilization than hitherto. The emancipation was the fruit of 18th century Enlightenment, with its belief in an ordered Newtonian universe and its hostility to the emotional and mystical aspects of religion. Toleration was now no longer a mere matter of practice or the result of a balance of forces at the end of exhausting wars of religion ; now it became a matter of principle, a recognition of the freedom and sovereignty of the individual human intellect. The Rights of Man and the goodness of man in the natural state were much discussed ideas especially in the second half of the century, and these too worked towards a removal of the legal and social disabilities of the Jews.

While the emancipation was thus the result of broad and majestic movements of the collective mind of Europe, one man deserves special credit for making it a reality—Moses Mendelssohn. Son of a Dessau Tora Scribe, he spent years of his youth, cramped by poverty and prejudice, in acquiring the means of access to the culture of Europe. He studied mathematics, philosophy and, perhaps most important of all, the language of his native country. Soon his accomplishments made him the friend of many leading men of his day, notably Lessing, whose play *Nathan der Weise* takes Mendelssohn as the model for its hero. Mendelssohn was not a great original thinker and was within the mainstream of 18th century thought, a believer in Reason and high ethical principles and a man of balanced common sense. As a personality, however, he was most impressive and his graceful style made his writings widely popular. Those who were favourably disposed towards the Jews, not only in Germany, but also Mirabeau, for example, in France, pointed to Mendelssohn as living proof of the good and noble qualities of the Jewish race. Amongst Jews he was an encouragement to those who strove for more intimate association with European civilization while proudly retaining their Jewish faith. His translation of the Pentateuch into German caused much controversy but

it was epoch-making in leading many Jews to learn the vernacular. A pamphlet on *The Civil Improvement of the Jews* (1781) by Mendelssohn's friend Dohm was another important step towards bringing the position of the Jews to the notice of the educated European public.

### **Problems raised by Emancipation**

The actual process of emancipation varied in its speed and completeness. Wherever and whenever it came it created great problems. The effect of the sudden opening of the Ghettoes on the Jews was like the grant of liberty after long imprisonment. Many Jews rushed to embrace the civilization now open to them and tried to cast aside all vestiges of their former bondage. There were many uncertainties and false steps in so rapid an adjustment to a new environment. The process was, moreover, accompanied by an internal Jewish crisis: Judaism was not only a religion, but a way of life, closely regulated by ritual and custom. How was this way of life to be made compatible with full participation in a Christian world? Throughout the 19th century various solutions to this dilemma were put forward, ranging from acceptance of the Christian religion through liberal reformed Judaism to attempts at combining Jewish orthodoxy and Western ways of living. On top of these difficult adjustments Judaism had to face the same general onslaught on faith and religion as Christianity during the 19th century. It was therefore not surprising that many Jews stood in danger of losing their bearings.

### **Jewish Achievements in Public Affairs**

Whatever the difficulties emancipation might entail for Jewish communities, whatever the spiritual and psychological uncertainties of individuals, massive achievements by Jews within the framework of Western civilization now became possible. It is not only the greatness of these achievements that is noteworthy, but their broad range extending over the whole field of human endeavour. In politics and public affairs we find Jews as the advocates of the most diverse philosophies and parties. The fact that their emancipation was the result of liberal and rational impulses pre-disposed them perhaps towards the liberal and revolutionary camp. Many Jews took part in the revolution of 1848, fighting sometimes, like the German Jew Gabriel Riesser, both for the liberation of their fellow countrymen from feudal government and for the acceptance of their co-religionists as full and equal citizens. Special reasons account for the relative prominence of Jews in the Russian revolutionary movement: their position as an oppressed minority within the Czarist Empire.

On the right-wing of European politics there were also some notable Jewish men. Disraeli, although a practising member of the Church of England, was much affected in his outlook by his Jewish ancestry; his active Eastern policy may in part be ascribed to his romantic leanings



MOSES MENDELSSOHN  
(1729—1786)

towards the Orient. His influence on the development of the Constitution in an age of advancing democracy and his part in creating the modern Conservative Party require no emphasis. A parallel figure to Disraeli in Germany was Stahl, a baptized Jew, the creator of the Prussian Conservative Party to which Bismarck gave his allegiance in his younger days. Stahl was not primarily an executive statesman, but he formed into a coherent doctrine of Christian conservatism the less articulate aims and instincts of the Junkers. We see thus from the example of politics how varied and catholic the contribution of the Jews was; so much so, that it becomes difficult to point to any common element among the many prominent

Jews of the 19th and 20th centuries. Some took a positive view of their Jewish heritage; others, for instance the poet Heine, felt it to be a misfortune and suffered from divided loyalties; others again were so far removed from it that it remains for the biographer or the historian to point out how they were affected by it. It is perhaps possible to venture the generalization that the Jews by virtue of a position which continued to be slightly insecure and not always clearly defined even after the Emancipation, were highly aware of and sensitive to the currents and movements of the time: thus they were often precursors and outstanding as interpreters of life and art, but sometimes the highest creative achievements eluded them.

### **Achievements in Finance**

The part played by Jews in finance and industry in the 19th century has, as in previous periods, been more discussed than any other aspect of their influence. The House of Rothschild has become a symbol of financial power. Meyer Amschel Rothschild was a Frankfurt Jew, one of the many



Jewish agents employed by the petty princes of 18th century Germany. He founded the Bank in Frankfurt in 1760; his sons ran branches in London, Paris, Vienna and Naples. The London Rothschild, Nathan Mayer, was much the most able of the brothers and helped greatly towards making London the chief centre for international monetary transactions. The influence of the House of Rothschild was at its height during the first half of the century, particularly in France, where they financed much of the railway construction. In 1848 the Rothschilds were great losers and the growth of new devices for raising capital, for instance limited liability companies, diminished their importance. But as late as 1875 the London House was the only bank which could supply funds at short notice for Disraeli's purchase of the Suez Canal shares. Lionel de Rothschild was the first Jew to sit in the House of Commons (1858). The Rothschilds were not the only important Jewish financiers and industrialists; even so it may be doubted if the contribution of the Jews towards the industrial revolution is proportionately very large.

### **Rise of Modern Antisemitism**

The growth of modern antisemitism began as soon as the Jews became full participants in the life of Europe, but only the decline of political Liberalism on the continent of Europe after 1870 made it into an important force. The Dreyfus Affair which convulsed France for years, showed up the whole gamut of modern political ideology and the place of antisemitism in it. The forces of the Right became anti-Dreyfusards in defence of French national honour and the General Staff; the forces of the Left defended



*Baron Lionel de Rothschild takes his seat in House of Commons*

*Illustrated London News*

Dreyfus for the sake of the principle of Justice. The Jewish question became a central issue almost by accident and there is some truth in Clemenceau's remark that Dreyfus was the only man in France who did not understand the great principles that were at stake. Often subsequently antisemitism in its political form has taken on a life of its own, independent almost of the presence and activities of Jews. The Dreyfus Affair showed up the continued precariousness of the Jewish position after a century of Liberalism. Theodor Herzl, the Paris correspondent of a Vienna newspaper, was deeply moved by his close-up view of the Affair and received from it the impulse which made him the founder of modern political Zionism.

Our passage through the centuries has shown us the Jews as an important element of European civilization. Both the larger world of Europe and the smaller world of the Jewish communities have undergone great changes with the passage of time; yet there remains something constant about the challenge which the presence of these Jews presents to Europe; fine as the Jewish achievements are, this challenge which their mere presence has consistently presented to the conscience and morality of Europe is perhaps even more significant.

## How the Land of Israel Celebrates Chanukah

BERTHA URDANG.

*The first day of the Festival of Chanukah falls on December 16th. Common Ground asked Mrs. Urdang, who was in Jerusalem while it was besieged, to give readers an account of the significance of this festival in Israel to-day.*

THE great problem confronting Jewish traditional life in the Diaspora is continuity: how to imbue the children of each succeeding generation with the spirit which inspired their parents, although less than their parents' parents. In Jewish Palestine of yesterday and Israel to-day, the situation is completely reversed. It is precisely the children who demand of their parents that the home echo the spirit of the Jewish festivals, that the holiday atmosphere in the streets and villages permeate the home.

Religion and religious observance have, in Israel, acquired the character and texture of folk culture, almost of folk-lore. Whether or not the individual Jewish home observes the dietary laws and the injunctions attached to Sabbath observance, Sabbath is indeed a day apart, a day anticipated eagerly and revelled in by free-thinker no less than, albeit differently from, the pious man. Possibly, perhaps even probably, the full six-day working week contributes much to the complete "otherness" of the Sabbath, although I doubt whether a five-day working week would seriously affect its character.

The Festivals, too, assume new meaning. It is by no means rare that, in a home where no dietary laws are observed, and where the Sabbath is celebrated in a manner abhorrent to the orthodox Jew, a Succah or Tabernacle is erected during the Feast of Tabernacles, because it is somehow right and proper to dwell in a booth during that period of the year in Israel ! The Passover, and more particularly the Sedar Service which ushers in the eight-day Festival, is celebrated in virtually every home and settlement in Israel—because, apart from its national significance as the Festival commemorating the exodus from Egypt, and the coming to the Promised Land—the children of Israel to-day demand that their parents retell the story each year, a story which has modern significance as well as historical importance, and of which they never tire.

### **The Feast of Lights**

But, apart from Purim, no Festival is celebrated with such abandon and joy as is Chanukah, the Feast of Lights, commemorating the successful revolt of the Maccabeans against their Syrian-Greek conquerors in 161 B.C.E.

Near Jerusalem, nestled in the wild hills, lies Modein, the village in which lived Matityahu and Hannah and their five brave sons, who were the core and focus of the revolt, as a result of which an independent Jewish State was set up and endured for some eighty years. To-day, Modein is merely a symbol. Once a year, at Chanukah, it comes to life: a flame is kindled among the rocks, among the grave-stones of the Maccabeans, and from it a torch is lit. It is carried by relays of runners to Tel Aviv, where hundreds of youth leaders assemble to watch the kindling of the Menorah, or eight-branched Chanukah candelabra. Thence, youthful torch-carriers carry the flame to the remotest hamlets and villages of the country, thus keeping alive that flame of faith inherited from the Maccabeans. It may, of course, be because our generation in Israel has been called upon to emulate the feats of the Maccabeans, but, again, I do not think that Chanukah will lose any of its social charm and significance in future generations when Israel may be allowed to relax its vigilance and struggle.

Mystique ? Sentimentality ? Symbolism ? Yes, all of those and more. The mystique, sentimentality and symbolism of folk-lore projected into the twentieth century.

Every public building in the country is topped with a huge electric Menorah, and their lights reflect those kindled and placed in the windows of every Jewish home. Towards sundown, parents are seen hurrying

homewards to kindle the lights, recite the prayer of thanksgiving and sing the traditional Chanukah hymn, Rock of Ages, and, and here is the crucial point, the many delightful Chanukah songs which the children learn at kindergarten and teach their parents.

### **The Miracle of Chanukah**

The children play the traditional Chanukah game, with a four-sided top, on which are engraved the letters "nun," "gimmel," "hay," "peh," initial letters of the words: "Ness Gadol haya poh"—"a great miracle happened here." The "miracle" refers to the legend that, when the Temple was liberated and cleansed of the defilement imposed upon it by Antiochos, there was very little oil left in the crucible of the Ner Tamid (the 'perpetual light') and yet the minute quantity lasted for eight days, until more oil could be brought. To the Jews of Israel, to-day, however, the miracle has more immediate significance, best illustrated, perhaps, by the joke current during the grim Jewish-Arab war that an Israeli who does not believe in miracles is no realist !



*CHILDREN LIGHTING CHANUKAH CANDLES*

*By courtesy of B. Urdang*

In addition to the top game, for which the stakes are traditionally nuts, but, in recent times, have been spent bullets and prize pieces of shrapnel, mothers ply their children with the traditional fare of Chanukah—pancakes and doughnuts.

My daughter's birthday was always celebrated on the eighth day of Chanukah. Dressed in white, Daphne, lighted candle in her right hand, acted as Shamash or Beadle and kindled the candles held by eight of her friends also dressed in white. The eyes of the children gleamed, reflecting the flame of their candles, while they and the rest of the young—and not-so-young—guests raised the roof in singing a kindergarten Chanukah song. A living Menorah! A living Chanukah! A living Judaism of a living Israel!

## A New Translation of the Bible

GEORGE S. HENDRY

*The preparation of a new English version of the Bible for authorised use in the Churches is a matter of such importance and interest, that "Common Ground" asked permission to reprint from THEOLOGY a shortened form of an article by Dr. Hendry, the Secretary of the Joint Committee on the New Translation of the Bible. This is a Non-Roman translation. We hope shortly to publish an article on the new Roman Catholic translation by Mgr. Ronald Knox, of which the New Testament and part of the Old Testament have already appeared.*

THE project of a new translation of the Bible in modern English, which should receive some kind of official recognition by the Churches in this country, was first mooted in 1946 in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The submission was made that "the language of the Authorized Version is archaic and has become largely unintelligible to the people, and the work of the Church, both in preaching the gospel and in instructing the young, is gravely impeded in consequence"; and the General Assembly were asked to initiate measures for the preparation of a new translation of the Bible in the language of the present day, which might be authorized for use in public worship and instruction.

### Why a New Version is Needed

At that time, both the Church of England Report, *Towards the Conversion of England*, and the Church of Scotland Report, *Into all the World*, bore witness to the urgent necessity of presenting the gospel to the large pagan, or semi-pagan, masses in our midst; and both discussed ways and means by which it might be done more effectively. In the Scottish report it was argued that one of the main difficulties is the gulf which separates the language in which the Church is accustomed to

clothe its message from that of those whom it seeks to address. "The terminology which the evangelist naturally employs has almost no meaning for those whom he wishes to address. He seems to them to be speaking in a foreign language and using words which convey nothing to their minds."

This difficulty is not to be met by appeals to ministers and clergy to simplify the language they use, as if it had its root in an arbitrary predilection for obscurity on their part; it has its root in the language of the Bible. For the message which the Church has to proclaim is the message of the Bible, and the language of the Church cannot but take its colour, to a large extent, from the language of the Bible.

The difficulty presents itself most acutely to those whose duty it is to teach the Bible in school. It was felt also by chaplains to the Forces, and I have heard of cases where an awakened interest in the Christian gospel was severely damped when the men tried to read the Bible. It cannot be gainsaid that to those of our people who have not had more than an elementary schooling in language and literature, there is much in the Authorized Version which is quite unintelligible. Moreover, there is no valid theological reason why the Church should insist that the people of the twentieth century should receive the Word of God in the archaic language of the seventeenth.

### **Revision or New Translation ?**

Those were the main considerations which led the General Assembly to approach the authorities of the larger Christian communions in the United Kingdom, and suggest that if they were disposed to favour the proposal, they should appoint delegates to confer informally, and see if an agreed plan of action might be recommended. All the Churches agreed and delegates met in London in the winter of 1946-47. Agreement on the desirability of a new version was quickly reached, and discussion centred on the question whether it should take the form of a fresh revision of the old version or whether a completely new translation should be attempted. The American Bible Committee had chosen the former alternative and had recently published the first instalment of their labours in *The Revised Standard Version of the New Testament*. It was generally agreed, however, that revision does not go far enough to meet the need of the present day in this country, and on purely literary grounds, there are serious objections to the idea of a twentieth-century revision of a seventeenth-century classic. Any attempt to modernize such a genuine antique as the Authorized Version is likely to produce the suspicion of a fake, while a revision of the Authorized Version merely purged of errors and archaisms, and retaining, or attempting to retain, the archaic flavour

of the original, would be prone to foster the impression, already present in many minds, that the *message* of the Bible belongs to a bygone age, and has no relevance to the world of the twentieth century.

The authorities of the Churches represented at the preliminary conferences all approved the proposal and accredited representatives to the Joint Committee, which met in London in July, 1947. The Bishop of Truro was elected chairman. The Committee now includes representatives of all the main branches of the Christian Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland, and also of the two principal Bible Societies.

### **Guiding Principles**

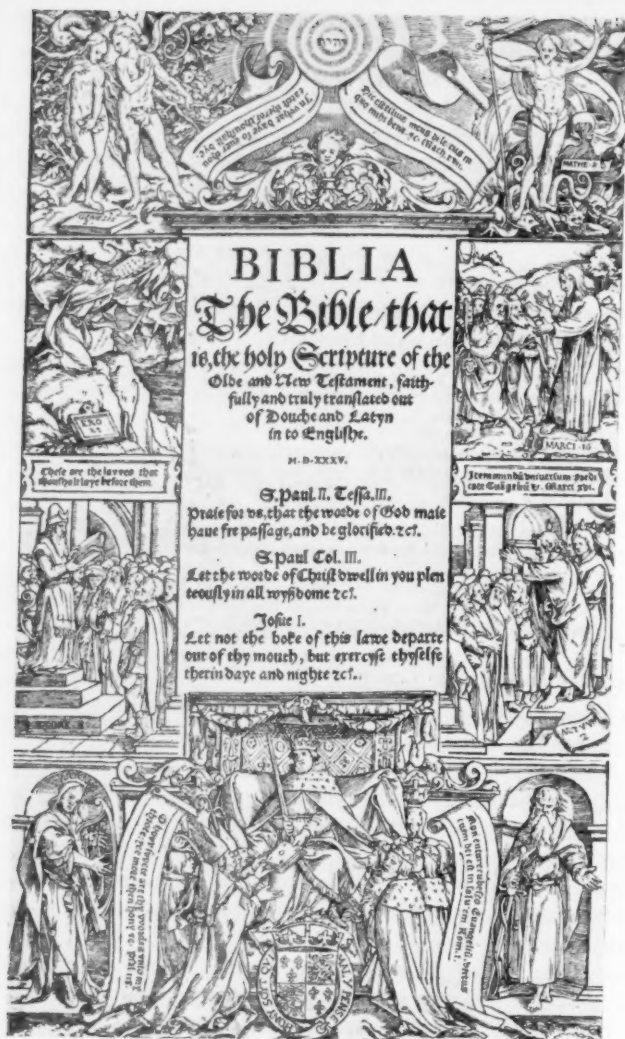
The first task of the Committee was to formulate the principles on which the new translation should be based. These are :—

1. The work is to be a new translation, not a revision of the *Authorised Version* or the *Revised Version*, having as its object to render the original into contemporary English.
2. Regard shall be paid to the native idiom and current usage of the English language, and Hebraisms, Grecisms, and other un-English expressions shall be avoided.
3. The translation shall be based on the best ascertainable text, and where doubt exists alternative renderings shall be appended.
4. The translation shall be printed in paragraph form; poetical books and passages shall be printed in verse form; and the modern system of punctuation, including marks of quotation, shall be employed.

### **Individual Translators or Groups ?**

The Committee had next to consider the method to be adopted for carrying out the work. In the history of Bible translation two methods have been employed, both in ancient and in modern times: some translations have been made by individuals, others by groups of scholars working together in committee. There is much to be said for both methods, and both can point to notable successes. At the same time, both methods have their drawbacks. The vast bulk of the Bible makes its translation a formidable task for a single individual, and the variety of its contents demands a degree of versatility which no single individual is likely to possess. The committee method, on the other hand, is cumbrous and slow, and committees are apt to be too cautious and to lack that element of boldness and imagination which translation often calls for.

The Joint Committee has attempted to devise a method which will combine the merits of each of these and avoid their drawbacks. It began by setting up three "advisory and consultative Panels," for the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Apocrypha respectively, and it



TITLE PAGE OF COVERDALE'S BIBLE  
*The first complete Bible in English.*

British Museum



invited a number of the foremost Biblical scholars in the country to join them. The task of these Panels is to deal with the many technical problems involved in the work, especially that of the text, and to supervise the work of the translators. The actual translation is to be done by individual scholars. The material has been divided up and each portion has been assigned to a translator who is an acknowledged expert in that particular branch of Biblical study. It may be hoped that this method will enable the new translation to give a truer impression of the rich variety of style among the Biblical writings than any existing version does.

The Committee has introduced a fourth Panel, whose special responsibility it is to watch over the English of the translation. This Panel of Literary Advisers is composed of men distinguished in English letters.

There are some problems which cannot be solved by translation, however skilfully it be done, and it is well to recognize this at the outset. There are a number of frequently recurring terms which are central to the thought of the Bible, but for which there are no precise equivalents in English. To try to meet this difficulty it is proposed to add a short glossary containing explanatory notes on the most important of these terms, and showing where the meaning which they bear in the thought of the Bible, differs from that of the English words chosen to represent them in translation.

### Basic Texts

The Old Testament Panel has decided to take as its basis the Hebrew text contained in Kittel's *Editio tertia*, but where one or more of the ancient Versions indicates a text different from the Massoretic Text, a rendering of the underlying Hebrew may be admitted. The New Testament Panel did not consider that any existing text could be taken as the sole basis of the translation, and they have resolved to judge each variant reading on its merits, considering the evidence of the ancient Versions as of equal account with that of Greek MSS.

Regret has been expressed that it has not been found possible for the British and American Committees to join forces in the production of a single new version, which would be common to both the great branches of the English-speaking family. But the differences in aim and method between the two bodies—the reasons for which have been discussed and are sympathetically understood on both sides—are too deep to permit this dream to be realized. Nevertheless, friendly relations have been established between the two Committees, and arrangements are being made for the interchange of comment and criticism between the two groups of scholars.

## High Leigh, 1949

*The Summer Conference of the Council of Christians and Jews took place at High Leigh, which is situated in a beautiful part of Hertfordshire, from September 12-16. Common Ground gives its readers a short description of that important event.*

IT IS usual to begin at the beginning. A description of the Summer Conference of the Council of Christians and Jews would best begin at the end because Dr. James Parkes, one of the two co-Chairmen, in his concluding remarks, while reminding his audience that the work would be costly both in time and money, laid great stress on its vital importance.

This stress was both timely and encouraging. The members of the conference numbered delegates from the Local Councils, social workers engaged in fields of activity in which racial and religious tensions exist, and representatives from the Jewish Board of Deputies. During the week they had discussed the practical problems which have to be faced in the furtherance of the Council's work; the increasing difficulty in raising funds which adds greatly to the complication of forward planning, problems of Religious Liberty which have arisen in Eastern Europe and their repercussions in this country, and a growing spirit of antisemitism which manifests itself in certain sections of the community. The conference, however, was inspired by the conviction of the importance and urgency of its task, the conviction to which formal expression was given by Dr. Parkes in his summing-up of the salient features of the discussions.

### The Local Councils

In these discussions, attention was focussed on that which was constructive. The Local Council delegates came from Hull and South Shields, from Leeds and Manchester, from Chester, Birmingham, Leicester, Oxford, Bristol and Cardiff. The reports from such varied parts of England reflected great differences of local characteristics and opportunities. It was admitted by all that a successful programme, for example, for Birmingham might be a failure on Tyneside and vice-versa. Local members, therefore, were encouraged to work out plans in the light of local conditions, albeit receiving suggestions and stimulus from the experience gained in other areas. Time was devoted also to the study of new ways in which the Central Council could serve, and co-operate with the Local Councils; such as the supply of speakers, production of literature and the improvement of *Common Ground*, etc.

### Subjects of the Discussions

A number of interesting speakers had been invited to the conference. Mr. Russell Lavers, Research Secretary to Mr. Seebohm Rowntree, intro-

duced on the first evening a preliminary consideration of the underlying causes of group tensions, and the general situation in this country. The following day, a discussion on Jewish-Christian relations and the State of Israel was introduced by Dr. E. Yapou, Press Attaché to the Legation of Israel, and Mrs. Urdang (Zionist Information Office) gave an informal talk of life in Jerusalem while it was besieged. The important subject of Religious Liberty was introduced by Rev. Ronald Rees, Secretary of the International Department of the British Council of Churches, and a lively discussion followed. Dr. James Parkes and Mr. Neville Laski shared the Chairmanship and both made valuable contributions to the meetings.

### **Social Evenings**

One evening was devoted to a demonstration of a Trio Team. The audience was interested and inclined to be lively and critical, but deeply appreciative of what has already been done by Trio Teams, and their possibilities for the future.

One evening was set aside for social entertainment and the conference was intrigued by Mr. L. Saïpe, a delegate from Leeds, whose magic never fails to satisfy and to delight.

At the close of the Conference, members came away feeling that they had received fresh inspiration for their very vital task, and with a sense of encouragement derived from new, and renewed, friendships.

K.H.

## **The Jewish Book Exhibition**

MYER DOMNITZ

*Common Ground* asked Mr. Domnitz to write an account of this important exhibition, October 17-29, which was organised by the Central Jewish Lecture Committee in co-operation with the Jewish Memorial Book Department, Jew's College Library, the Jewish Museum and the Wiener Library, at Woburn House, London.

**F**OR OVER sixteen years, the Central Jewish Lecture Committee has provided speakers on Jewish subjects of general interest for Christian organisations and in this way has been able to make a positive contribution towards inter-community understanding. As a development of its educational activities, the Jewish Book Exhibition was organised to illustrate Jewish life and thought by a careful selection of the vast literature which is available; its appropriateness is the fact that the book has always occupied a primary place in the heart and affection of the Jewish people throughout their history.

The Exhibition was organised in five sections, the first of which was the subject of *Judaism*. It is not surprising that there is a considerable

variety of works on Judaism, since for many generations Jewish Rabbis and teachers have written extensively in order to show how Jewish teachings add to the individual's capacity to live according to the spiritual heritage of his fathers. Whilst this section included the works of such intellectual giants as Maimonides, especially his *The Guide for the Perplexed*, and of Yehuda Halevi, the great philosopher-poet, considerable stress was laid upon works which have been published within the last three or four generations; such are indicated by Israel Abrahams'



*Traditional Portrait of Maimonides  
and his autograph*

*The Glory of God*, Leo Baeck's *The Essence of Judaism*, Salis Daiches' *Aspects of Judaism*, and M. Friedlander's classic *The Jewish Religion*. The late Chief Rabbi, Dr. J. H. Hertz, made many valuable contributions to religious thought, and these were illustrated by his *Affirmations of Judaism*, his brilliant commentary on the Pentateuch, and his world famous compilation *The Book of Jewish Thoughts*. His edition of the Authorised Daily Prayer Book, with his notes, was one of many other editions of Hebrew prayer books which were displayed. Anglo-Jewry has been admirably served by the writings of the Principal of Jews' College, Rabbi Dr. I. Epstein, and his recent works, *Judaism* and the

*Jewish Way of Life*, were notable contributions; they display a profound scholarship, and are written in a most attractive manner. Dr. Epstein's works have proved to be of great interest to many Christian readers.

The works dealing with the Bible were naturally of paramount importance, and the organisers were fortunate to obtain the Bible commentaries published by the Soncino Press, under the editorship of Rev. Dr. A. Cohen, and regarded as outstanding examples of the Biblical scholarship of recent years. Apart from Hebrew versions of the Bible there were important translations, such as that of the Jewish Publication Society of America. Another work of great value was the English translation of the popular Commentary on the Pentateuch by the remarkable medieval commentator Rashi; other commentaries on the Bible by distinguished teachers were also displayed. In view of the important part archaeology has played in illustrating the truths of the Bible, it was not surprising to find works by such authorities as Sir Frederick Kenyon, Sir Charles Marston, Sir W. Flinders Petrie and C. Leonard Woolley.

### **The Talmud**

That magnum opus, the Babylonian Talmud, was also made available. In particular was the Soncino Press English translation—whose editor is Rabbi Dr. I. Epstein—recently completed and widely acclaimed as an historic event in Anglo-Jewish scholarship. It was obvious that a place would be found for translations of those pregnant but concise sayings, *The Ethics of the Fathers*, which display the wisdom of great Jewish teachers, whose insight into human conduct can still be of great service to us in our modern perplexities. As examples of the important work being undertaken by Christian scholars in the sphere of Jewish studies, were *The Mishnah* by H. Danby, *Talmud and Apocrypha* by H. Travers-Herford, and *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, by C. F. Moore. It was of special interest that the section on Judaism included the new edition of *Everyman's Talmud*, which has for many years enjoyed a wide reputation and it is noteworthy that the distinguished author, the Rev. Dr. A. Cohen, is also the first spiritual leader to become the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

A variety of textbooks were displayed indicating the many approaches to the teaching of Hebrew grammar, and of special interest to Christian theological students in their study of Classical Hebrew.

### **Jewish History**

The historical section dealt with the broad sweep of Jewish life, literature and thought from Post-Biblical to contemporary times. The

visitor was able to note such general histories covering this period as those of H. Graetz, the founder of modern Jewish historical writings, and Cecil Roth, the leading historian of Anglo-Jewry. The distinguished American scholar, Salo Baron, was represented by his illuminating *Social and Religious History of the Jews*.

The works of Josephus, the Jewish historian, man of affairs and citizen of the ancient world were on display, while N. Bentwich's acute studies on *Hellenism and Philo* illustrated the impact of Greek upon Jew. It was appropriate that the effect of Jewish religious, cultural, and social activities in their widest context should have been noted in the lucid and encyclopaedic *Jewish Contribution to Civilisation* by Cecil Roth, and those brilliant and thought-provoking essays, *The Legacy of Israel*.

Israel Abrahams' *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages* was a very noteworthy exhibit; here was to be found a lively, human and scholarly account of a very chequered period of Jewish living. Through a master's touch were recaptured the sighs, the sufferings and also the joys of a much tried people.

The biographies of great Jewish figures had their special appeal; while the histories of Jewish literature by Israel Abrahams, J. Klausner, W. Oesterley and G. Box, and M. Waxman enabled the student to obtain a comprehensive background of Jewish letters.

### **The Anglo-Jewish Community**

The section on the Anglo-Jewish Community was rich in the interest and diversity of exhibits; it was closely linked with the vivid and colourful collections dealing with Anglo-Jewry in the Jewish Museum and the valuable and detailed studies in Anglo-Judaica in Jews' College Library.

The Jewish Historical Society's publications had a considerable value in illuminating many periods of communal history. It was significant that the works dealing with the Jews on London, medieval Jewry and Anglo-Jewish history as a whole were written by former and present notabilities of the Society, such as Elkan and Michael Adler, Canon S. Stokes, Joseph Jacobs, A. Hyamson and Cecil Roth.

The period of Resettlement came to life in the documents and works dealing with that amazing personality, Menasseh Ben Israel, the spiritual founder of Anglo-Jewry. The histories of the various Synagogues, commencing with the First London Synagogue of the Resettlement by Wilfred Samuel, made very fascinating reading; while the development of Anglo-Jewry since the 17th Century was clearly illustrated by a variety of publications dealing with institutions and personalities.

The Board of Deputies, the representative organisation of Anglo-Jewry since 1760, exhibited its early Minute Books; and brief historical surveys in Charles Emanuels' *A Century and a Half of Jewish History*, and *The Deputies* by S. Salomon were also on view.

### **Post-Biblical Palestine**

The history of Post-Biblical Palestine was the theme of this section; and this was admirably described in the latest book of that eminent historian, the Rev. J. W. Parkes.

The many aspects of the movement which reached its climax in the emergence of the State of Israel, provided publications of considerable interest. The powerful writings of Theodore Herzl, the architect of the Jewish State, had a prophetic utterance, while the brilliant philosophical expositions of Ahad Ha-am (sympathetically translated by Sir Leon Simon), have left their historical impress. The work of the religious organisations was depicted in *The History of the Mizrachi Movement*, by L. J. Fishman. It was appropriate that Lord Balfour's speeches on Zionism should be displayed, since that philosopher-statesman will be remembered in history for his famous letter to Lord Rothschild, which led to the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.

The autobiography of Chaim Weitzman, the first President of Israel, *Trial and Error*, deserved a special place because of the many-sided genius of that great figure; beside this work, there was also appropriately to be found *Palestine and the Post-War World*, by Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion.

In the selection of important contemporary Hebrew literary works, pride of place went to the poems of Nahman Bialik, the greatest modern Hebrew Poet.

The Hebrew University also enabled us to see its valuable contributions to Hebrew letters and scholarship.

### **Group Relations**

Whilst the historical aspects of anti-Semitism, the worst from of group relationships, were illustrated by the valuable collections in Jews' College Library, this section dealt with the more modern manifestations. Dr. Parkes again placed us in his debt by his penetrative studies, *The Jew and His Neighbour, Enemy of the People, The Emergence of the Jewish Problem*.

The dire impact of Nazidom was vividly depicted by examples of Nazi literature, and the far-flung nature of Hitler's propaganda by Japanese and Arabic translations of *Mein Kampf* and a Braille edition of *Sturmer*, the vilest publication in the contemporary writing of the Press.

The effect of the destructive Hitler system was shown in such graphic works as *Hostages of Civilisation* (Reichmann), *A World in Ruins* (Schwab), and the poignant *The Vanished World*, depicting destroyed Eastern European Jewries. The world-wide ramifications of the Nazi inspired anti-Semitic international were forcefully pointed out in Bondy's *Racketeers of Hatred*.

We were thus reminded of the dangers of antisemitism as a ruthless force against Society. How this is being countered was illustrated by the work of educationists, religious leaders, and sociologists who were uniting their forces to show how we can learn to live together in one world. The famous *Springfield Plan*, one of the most stimulating experiments in this positive field of endeavour, was described in various studies as well as other valuable publications in social education. The work of U.N.E.S.C.O. admirably illustrated how inter-group understanding is an essential requisite for international understanding.

Works of fiction were to be found in each section as they helped to illuminate various phases of Jewish life; the writers included Zangwill, Golding, Feuchtwanger, Sholem Asch, the Zweigs and Fleg.

### **The Value of the Exhibition**

The advantage of having available the very varied and comprehensive collection of Judaica of the Jewish Museum cannot be over estimated, since the delightful and colourful works of art were of absorbing interest. Jews' College Library, with its outstanding collection of works, documents and rare manuscripts gave considerable depth to the general exhibition in the Rose Hertz Hall.

The Jewish Book Exhibition proved not only of value to elucidate Jewish Life and Thought for over 4,000 years, but clearly pointed out that healthy human relationships can be the only basis for the endurance of a Society which is to remain civilised.

## **Inter-Racial Relationships**

A STUDENTS' SYMPOSIUM

*Common Ground welcomes any communications from its readers who are interested in the aims which it exists to promote. It therefore reproduces the following extracts from papers on racial discrimination, and racial problems generally, written by adult students of social science at the Co-operative College, Stanford Hall, nr. Loughborough.*

"With the teaching of race goes arrogance, and the outlook becomes distorted. Intolerance becomes the order of the day. It provides an excuse for the most barbarous of practices, the unleashing of atavistic instincts, and the degradation of the whole human race.





*STUDENTS AT CO-OPERATIVE COLLEGE, LOUGHBOROUGH*

*Photo: Central Office of Information*

Historical experience points to the fact that racial mixture is advantageous, while 'pure' race, in the Nazi sense, has probably never existed, or at most, in small and secluded parts of the world. The British are the product of long inter-breeding of races, primitive ones and invaders, all of whom contributed something to our make-up.

During the war, in Germany, I saw many victims of the concentration camps, and the inmates of Belsen. This experience made me realise more than any sociological text-book ever could, the misery caused by racial discrimination."

\* \* \* \*

"Though science may enable us to refute the suggestions of the racial determinists, it can do little against the traditional convictions that exist

in so many countries, traditions which repeat tenaciously that there are differences in races, and if there are differences in races, there must also be inferior and superior races. The real solution lies in education. Everyone must finally realise the fact that (a) There is not one single or exclusive race, but that, biologically, we are all members of one very mixed race; (b) There is no evidence to show that mental ability or intelligence is in any way connected with somatic structure of ethnic groups; (c) Differences in mental ability or intelligence exist because of differences in environment and opportunity, and should not result in higher or lower social status; (d) Nobody, or no institution for that matter, ought to be judged on any other features but on his or its merits."

\* \* \* \*

"Education alone cannot eliminate all such conflicts unless it is accompanied by a programme of social, political, and economic progress. True, equal access to education for all can do much to break down barriers. Obviously, the most important thing is freedom and equality. Meanwhile, remember that you cannot judge a man rightly who has not enjoyed the self-same freedoms with which you yourself are familiar."

\* \* \* \*

"It is contended that history shows that racial arrogance and conquest, and exploitation of weaker races, have been practised by white and coloured races alike.

Countries where harmonious relations have been established between races of a different colour provide evidence enough to invalidate the contention that colour-feeling, and the resultant colour-bar, are either 'natural' or 'inherent.' One such country is Brazil, where Whites, Negroes, Indians and Mulattoes, freely intermingle without any feeling of colour superiority or inferiority. Again, in New Zealand, the native Maori population enjoys complete equality.

All forms of restrictions imposed upon a weaker race are wrong. For no matter how small these restrictions may be to begin with, there is little to prevent their logical extension, as was the case in Germany, with anti-Jewish measures, which led to the horrors of ruthless extermination."

\* \* \* \*

"Economic progress demands intercourse and interdependence of nations. Race and class distinction stand in the way: class distinctions are being broken down. Not so race distinctions. But these too must go.

It has been suggested that inter-marriage is the solution to racial problems, but I think not. What is needed is unity but not uniformity."

\* \* \* \*

"The whole course of inter-racial relationships has been marred by prejudice and discrimination. Cordial relationships can only be established and cemented by the adoption of a determined policy of complete racial equality which must be fostered and promoted by the enlightened and progressive members of all races, in a determination to eradicate all harmful tendencies at present preventing a completely free intercourse between, and thus the progress of, all races."

\* \* \* \*

"The matter cannot be solved by simple methods. True education is necessary, but not simply by one race, on better methods of living in society. What is required is the education of each individual so that he accepts his neighbour as a human being, whatever the so-called racial difference. And although man differs from man in physical appearance, there is an essential spiritual unity. This education ought to be encouraged, and in some way developed. It can be done by means of social and cultural contacts, by commerce, by political work, by a decline in the feeling of nationalism, and by attempts to understand one's fellow men."

## Commentary

### ● Our Attitude to Fascist Meetings

Reports keep coming in from different parts of the country of fascist meetings, both open-air and indoor. It seems probable that fascist groups are planning to use every opportunity they can find to spread their propaganda, and are by no means confining themselves to known "trouble-centres." Sometimes the meetings are openly antisemitic in character. On other occasions antisemitism is hidden, or at first not used at all.

What attitude can we take to these meetings and to their supporters ?

First, we should be clear in our minds that open opposition plays directly into the hands of those who promote the meetings. They want opposition. It gives them just the publicity they need to avoid complete ignominy. Counter-demonstrations, or simultaneous meetings in opposition held elsewhere, may be open to the same objections.

Secondly, we have to acknowledge that opinion is divided as to whether we should try in advance to stop the meetings actually taking

place by preventing the organisers from booking halls. On the one hand are those who argue that freedom of speech must be safeguarded, however we may detest the views of those who speak, and however dangerous what they may say. Only if a speaker actually breaks the law, as for instance by seditious libel of incitement to violence, should legal action be taken. On the other hand, many will argue that freedom does not imply licence, and that those who if given the chance would suppress freedom should not be given the opportunity to spread their doctrines.

Whatever the judgment on this question may be, certainly to give publicity to any attempt to prevent fascist meetings being held would simply provide the fascists with free advertisement and might rally to their support those whose judgment favoured full freedom of speech for all, whatever their doctrine.

It is known, however, that fascist and antisemitic groups, often under innocuous and unknown names, are trying to book Church halls for some of their meetings. If they are successful, their meetings derive an aura of respectability from the fact that they are held on Church premises, while on the other hand the Church itself is in danger of being suspected of having given implicit support by allowing its premises to be used by such groups. All who are concerned with the letting of Church and other private halls would therefore do well to enquire very carefully into the connections of any new organisation which tries to book a room for its meetings.

One last thing which can be done whenever a meeting is held which is suspected of being fascist or antisemitic, is to have a competent observer present to report who the speakers were and what they said, the number, type and reaction of the audience, and, at open-air meetings, the attitude of the audience to bystanders and to police, and vice-versa. Such reports, sent in to the Council of Christians and Jews, will all help in our efforts to safeguard this country against the racial and religious intolerance which are the stock-in-trade of totalitarianism in all its forms.

### ● Combined Action gives Strength

So the atomic bomb race has now begun ! The news that Russia is making atomic bombs was accepted calmly. Perhaps it was not really unexpected. Perhaps we have become so used to shocks of this kind in the last few years that one more makes little difference. Certainly there have been shocks in plenty since the war ended—the spread of communist totalitarianism to country after country that was “liberated” from fascist totalitarianism; the success of the communist revolution in China; the resurgence of fascism in Germany and Italy, and even in the Western democracies, this country included; the fundamental economic

disequilibrium between Europe and America; our own growing economic and social difficulties even four years after the war ended.

The total picture is of a world divided, and of the different parts divided within themselves. More, it is a picture of a people living in the shadow of fear—fear not of this or that specific threat, but of the unknown future. There can rarely have been a time in history when the future has seemed so uncertain to so great a proportion of mankind.

Christians and Jews have a dual responsibility in this situation. First, they must never tire of reaffirming the underlying fundamental unity of Man, and the artificiality of the barriers that now divide him. Against the discords and divisions of the world of to-day, Judaism and Christianity proclaim the universal truth that Man is one family under the Fatherhood of God.

Secondly, Christians and Jews are charged by their faith with responsibility to work to secure the recognition of man as a child of God, and to remove the divisions and the fears that man has created against himself. It is a responsibility that can be discharged in many different ways. It is a task that calls for the utmost effort from all of us, all the time.

### ● Calendar Reform

Reactions to the Panamanian proposal to raise the question of calendar reform at the September session of the United Nations General Assembly ranged from mild surprise to deep concern. At first sight there seems much to be said for regularising the irregularities of our present system of dividing up the days of the year into months of varying lengths. It would be so much easier to remember the date! There would be difficulties, however, especially for Orthodox Jewry for whom the proposed simplification would serve only to create a number of almost insoluble problems.

Happily, however, the Republic of Panama has had the very good sense to let the matter drop, at any rate for the time being. There are, after all, quite a number of other things to which the United Nations Assembly can much more usefully devote its time and energies.

And by this we mean not merely the endless discussions of the control of atomic power but the more constructive works of the functional agencies such as U.N.E.S.C.O., the Food and Agricultural Organisation, the World Health Organisation and the International Labour Office. Indeed, unless these bodies can be made to function still more effectively any future consideration of calendar reform may be rendered entirely superfluous by the disappearance of the calendar itself.

## About Ourselves

● We deeply regret the indisposition of Cardinal Griffin, who for the time being is ordered to rest from his many heavy responsibilities.

Prior to his illness, Cardinal Griffin had agreed to write a special Christmas message for publication in this issue of *Common Ground*, but our readers will understand that in the circumstances he was unable to do so.

We all wish him a speedy and complete recovery.

● A story from East London. A long series of incidents, not originally anti-semitic in nature, but due to the personal incompatibility of the daughter of a Stepney Jewish family with her neighbours culminated in two cases of assault, in the youngest child being bullied by other children at their parents' instigation and, finally, in the house being besieged by a mob of women. The daughter of the house had taken out summonses against four women and each of the four had taken out summonses against her. Hallam Tennyson, the Secretary of the Council of Citizens of East London, sat down in the parlour with all the parties concerned. For three hours 'the noise of battle rolled.' In the end all eight of the summonses were withdrawn and an armistice proclaimed. Hallam Tennyson is now helping towards a permanent peace settlement.

● A course of lectures on subjects of very close concern to readers of *Common Ground* has been arranged throughout the winter and early spring by the Council of Citizens of East London. The general subject is that of Group Relations, and the speakers will take into consideration historical, economic and social factors.

● Two interesting courses of University Extension lectures have been arranged as follows: "Survey of the History of Philosophy in Relation to Judaism," ten weekly lectures beginning Tuesday, October 25th, by Dr. J. Heller; and "Palestine through the Ages," ten weekly lectures beginning Wednesday, October 26th, by Rev. Dr. J. Parkes. The Lectures will be given at 8 p.m. at Jews' College, Woburn House, Tavistock Square, London: the fee is 7s. 6d. per course.

● On Remembrance Sunday, Nov. 6th, the Hampstead Council of Christians and Jews is arranging a Public Meeting in the Embassy Theatre, Eton Avenue, N.W.3. The principal speaker will be Lord Pakenham, and the Mayor of Hampstead will be in the Chair. A collection will be taken for the Hampstead War Memorial Fund. The meeting is to commence at 3.0 p.m. All readers of *Common Ground* who are able to be there, and their friends, will be welcome.

● The Annual General Meeting of the Council of Christians and Jews is to be held at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, November 23rd, in the Bishop Partridge Hall, Church House, Westminster. His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury will be in the Chair.

Members and Associate Members of the Council are cordially invited to be present. It would be helpful if those who expect to attend would notify the Council's office beforehand.



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**Mrs. Bertha Urdang** went to Israel in 1935. She is Director of Public Relations at the Zionist Information Office.

*Signed articles express the views of the Contributors which are not necessarily those of the Council of Christians and Jews.*

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## Book Notes

### **Our East London—How we came here**

*The first bulletin issued by the Schools Committee of the Council of Citizens of East London. 6d.*

The information in this pamphlet is prepared for the use of teachers in courses of civics and history. It covers the immigration of Huguenot refugees, Irish settlers, and Jewish refugees. It tells why they came, what new industries and crafts they brought with them, and how, despite difficulties and often strong opposition,

they have become absorbed into a common East London life that is richer because of the diversity of the groups that have made it what it is.

This is altogether an admirable pamphlet. The only criticism is that it is too short—but a list of books that have been used by the writers shows where fuller information on particular points can be obtained.

Future bulletins will deal with Industry, Crafts, Social and Educational Developments, the Home, Religion, Culture and other aspects of East End life.

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